



The Town of Westfield Master Plan Reexamination Report

Community & Public Participation Summary for the April 3rd Westfield Community Workshop



The Town of Westfield Master Plan Reexamination Report

Public Participation Summary for the April 3rd Community Workshop

Prepared By:



architects + engineers
practical approach. creative results.

Workshop Date:
April 3, 2019

Prepared Date:
April 18, 2019



Community & Public Participation

Purpose

This Master Plan Reexamination Report cannot be written, nor recommendations made without input from the people who live, work, and visit Westfield. Without valuable public input, this document will not accurately represent the wants and needs of Westfield residents. The Master Plan Reexam Team (H2M (*lead*) and TimHaahs) is working hard to obtain ideas, opinions, feedback, and concerns from the public throughout the year long Master Plan Reexamination process using “high touch” to “high tech” approaches, ranging from traditional workshops to online engagement. This collaborative approach provides community insight on the future of Westfield.

Community Workshops

A Master Plan Reexamination Steering Committee comprised of Westfield community leaders is helping to guide the Master Plan Reexam process. The Steering Committee, upon their first meeting in December 2018, believed input from several active Town organizations separate from public workshops would benefit the Master Plan Reexamination process. The Town of Westfield and the Master Plan Reexam Team planned six community workshops, four to occur in the beginning of the process to gather information and two additional meetings at the end to provide a “feedback loop” for residents.

The first public Community Workshop was held on March 21st at the Edison School Cafeteria, where approximately 70 people attended and Wednesday April 3, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm in the evening at Town Hall in the Community Room, where approximately 90 people attended the event.

The Master Plan Team and Town of Westfield is hosting several public Community Workshops in the month ahead to continue outreach efforts. These events include:

- Wednesday, April 24, 7-9pm: Edison School cafeteria
- Monday, April 29, 7-9pm: Town Hall Community Room
- Sunday, May 5: Spring Fling

In the fall, the Master Plan Team will hold Town-wide public meetings to discuss the draft of the plan and gain feedback on the Master Plan Reexamination Report’s draft goals, objectives and recommendations.

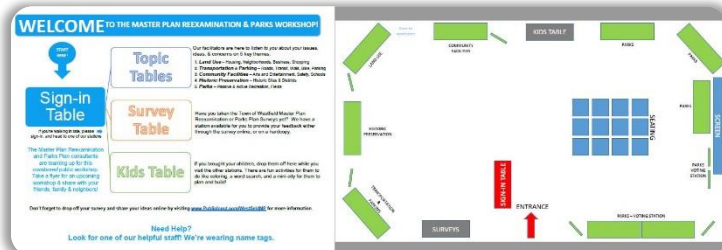


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The workshop began with an introduction from Jeff Janota of H2M Associates, the consultant preparing the Master Plan Reexamination Report and head organizer of the event. Erik DeLine and Nicole Venezia, planners from H2M, were also in attendance. Also, in attendance were Pat Hoagland and Keith Rodenhauer from Brandstetter Carroll, the Parks Plan consultant.

Upon sign-in, participants were given a Master Plan Reexamination Report flyer and an orientation/room layout handout for the night's activities. While waiting to sign-in participants were asked to indicate where they lived in Westfield. Participants were then directed by team members to gather near the projector for a short introductory presentation.



Above: orientation/room layout handout;
Right: Master Plan Reexam Flyer

**Town of Westfield presents:
Master Plan Reexamination**

The Town of Westfield is launching its Master Plan Reexamination to shape the physical, social, environmental, and economic future of the town. The Master Plan Reexam will provide a framework for preserving the Town's character, ensuring its diversity, supporting investment, and promoting desired changes, and we need your help.

Get Involved!
As part of the planning process, we are holding public meetings in Westfield and beyond the word on the new project website. We are talking to residents, businesses, and other stakeholders about the issues you face. We want to provide an opportunity for you to share your ideas for the town you want Westfield to become!

that means YOU!
We're asking you to get involved so we can ask you the right questions, listen to what you say, build a deeper understanding of your community, and help you find ways to make a better town.

The Reexam will result in revised Goals & Objectives & a new Town-wide Vision Statement

The Reexam covers the Elements of the Master Plan:

- Land Use
- Transportation & Parking
- Housing
- Downtown Economic Development
- Community Facilities
- Historic Preservation

Visit the project website & take the survey!
www.PublicInput.com/WestfieldMP

What is a Master Plan Reexam?
A Reexamination Report is a reassessment of a municipality's current Master Plan, which is required by law to be conducted at least every 10 years. The report documents what changes and problems have taken place since the last Master Plan, and identifies new recommended objectives and policies for consideration by the town.

The last time the town of Westfield drafted a full Master Plan was in 2003, and the town last reexamined the Master Plan in 2009. The Master Plan Reexam is expected to be complete at the end of 2019.

Join Us at an upcoming Community Workshop

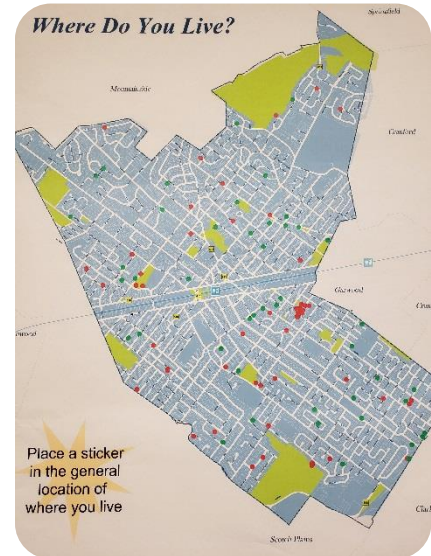
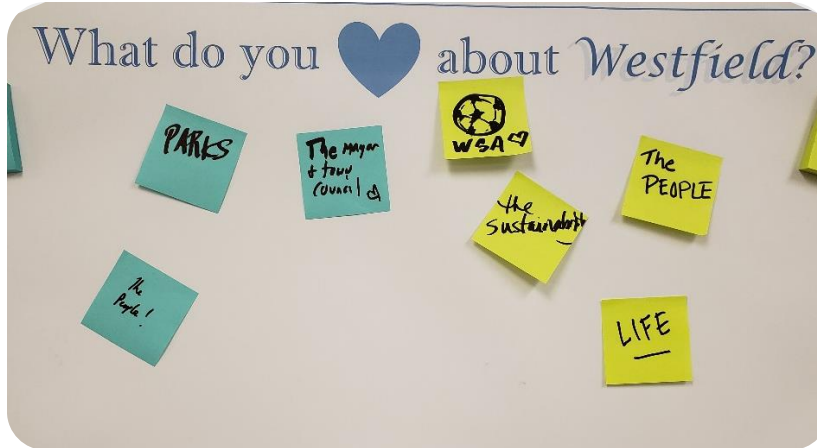
- Thursday, March 22, 7-9pm at Lisbon Intermediate School Cafeteria
- Wednesday, April 3, 7-9pm at Town Hall Community Room
- Wednesday April 24, 7-9pm at Edison Intermediate School Cafeteria
- Monday, April 28, 7-9pm at Town Hall Community Room

is at the **Spring Fling** May



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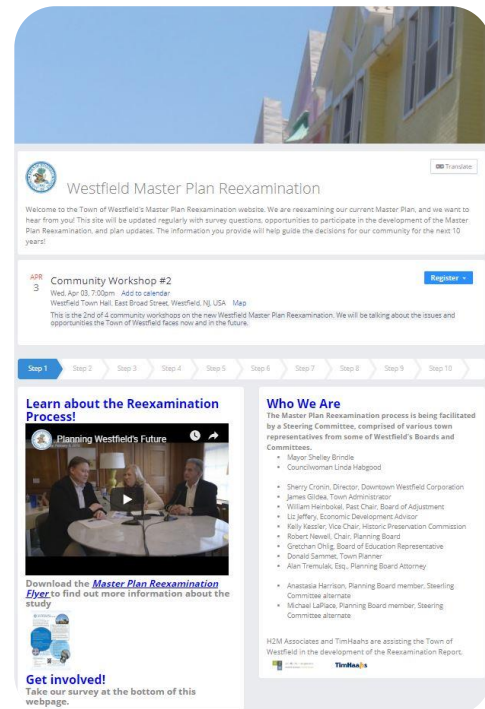
During the introduction, Jeff Janota (H2M) explained the Master Plan Reexamination Report and the purposes of the night's workshop:

1. To gain an understanding of Westfield community issues through the eyes of residents.
2. To promote the Master Plan Reexamination Report public participation process by encouraging participants to be ambassadors to the Plan.

Erik DeLine (H2M) then explained the project's website, <http://www.PublicInput.com/WestfieldMP> and encouraged participants to take the online survey in their free time. Erik also pointed out that the workshop included a survey table with laptops for online survey taking. Since the beginning of the survey process there have been 637 surveys submitted.

Interactive Portion

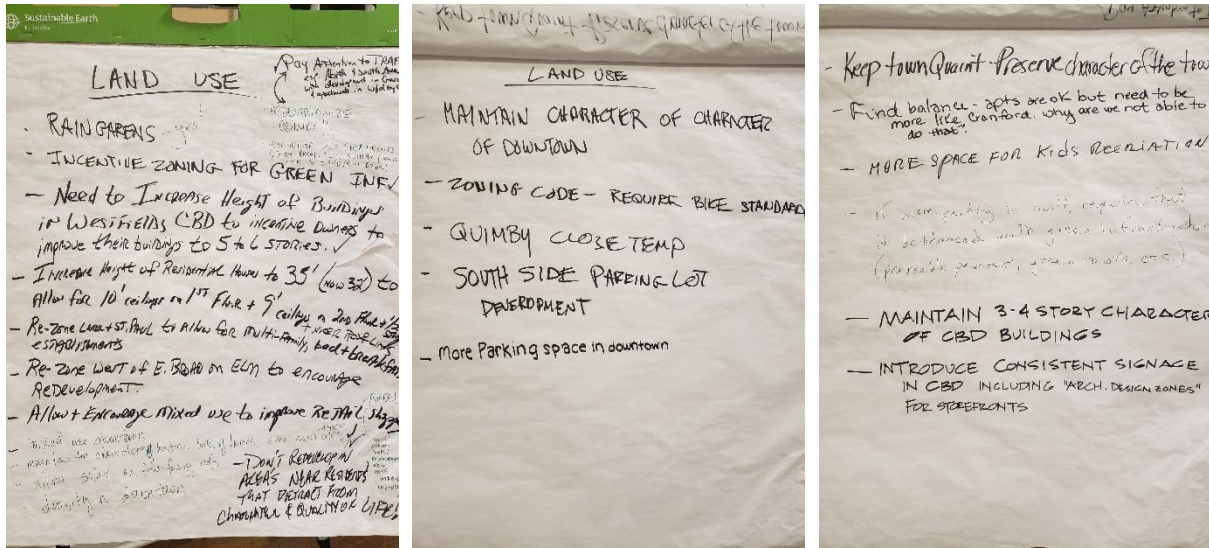
This interactive part of the workshop required workshop participants to join in conversation with the "topic table" facilitators broken out into (1) **Land Use and Economic Development**, (2) **Transportation & Parking** (3) **Community Facilities**, and (4) **Historic Preservation** to express their opinions, ideas, ask questions, and state their concerns. Each Topic Table was equipped with a handout for participants containing a 3-4 bulleted list of topics that could be discussed and a handful of guidance questions to help kickstart the brainstorming/interactive participation process. Each "topic table" was facilitated by a Master Plan Reexam Team member. A summary of issues resulting from the April 3rd workshop is listed on the following pages. **Bolded** items indicate popular or repeated sentiments.





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1. Land Use & Economic Development



Land Use & Economic Development concerns include:

General

- Keep town quaint – preserve **character of the town**
- Maintain the character and historic look of homes, even new ones. New homes don't reflect architecture.
- **No big box**
- Community center needed for kids
- Need for High tech office space

Downtown

- Maintain character of downtown
- Maintain 3-4 story character of Central Business District (CBD) buildings
- Need to increase height of buildings in Westfield's CBD to incentive owners to improve their buildings to 5 to 6 stories
- Increase density in downtown
- Introduce consistent signage in CBD including "architectural design zones" for storefronts

- Redevelop key shop fronts. e.g. on Broad, Elm, Quimby (some look very tired/run down)
- Re-zone west of E. Broad on Elm to encourage redevelopment, expansion of downtown
- **Allow and encourage mixed use to improve retail shopping**
- **Quimby - close temporarily for pedestrian events**
- South Side parking lot development, integrates South Avenue businesses
- **Provide more parking spaces in Downtown**
- Possible extension of downtown to Lord and Taylor Site if every redeveloped. Make sure uses are separate but complement each other.
- **Need fewer downtown vacancies, why does it continue to happen**



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Residential

- Find a balance – Apts. are ok but need to be more like Cranford.
- Don't redevelop in areas near residents that detract from character and quality of life!
- Too many multi-family homes associated with Affordable Housing
- Increase height of residential houses to 35' (now 32') to allow for 10' ceilings on 1st floor and 9' ceilings on 2nd floor and ½ story and nice rooflines
- Re-zone Lenox and St. Paul to allow for multi-family, bed & breakfast establishments
- Create more architectural standards for homes, to man similar styles from same builders.
- Incentivize for usable front porches, not fake ones

Open Space / Sustainability

- More space for kids recreation
- Provide opportunities for raingardens
- Incentive zoning for green infrastructure in land use code
- Allow solar on front-facing roofs, current code limits opportunity for all homes.

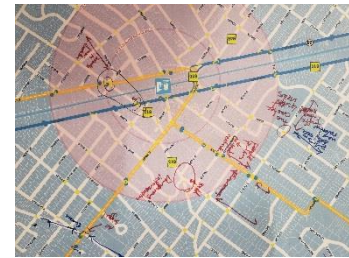
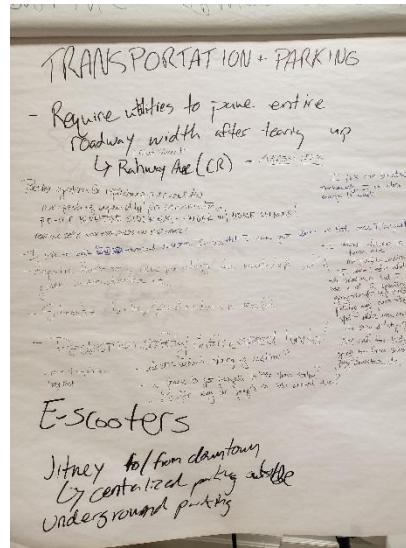
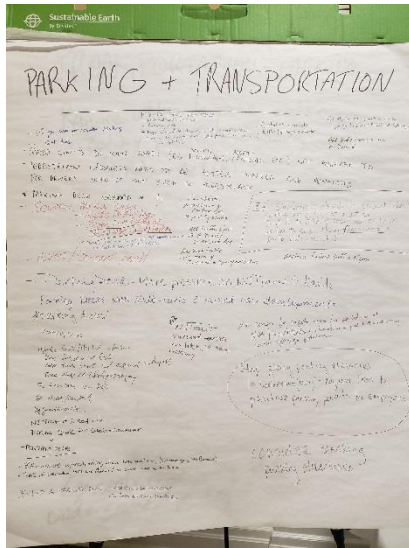
Transportation

- If more parking is built, require that it be balance with green infrastructure (permeable pavement, green roofs, etc.)
- Any parking deck should be "wrapped" with façade, architectural detail.
- Pay attention to traffic especially North and South Ave. with development in Garwood and apartments in Westfield by circle.
- Zoning Code – Require bike standards
- Needs comprehensive assessment



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2. Transportation & Parking



Transportation & Parking concerns include:

Roadways

- Yield signs needed in certain areas
- More 4-way stop signs
- Ramapo and Wyandotte – leaf piling into roadway & narrows road – dangerous. Need one-way streets
- Get the County to put a traffic light at Lambert's Mill Rd. and Rahway Ave.
- Add traffic signal at E. Broad and Chestnut Ave.
- Coordinate Downtown and Central Ave. signal systems
- Replace double left turn at E. Broad and Springfield Ave.
- Upgrade South/Central intersections
- Fix North /Central
- Upgrade Westfield Circle
- Add turn lane and expand underpass
- S. Chestnut to E. Chestnut – No signal
- W. Dudley & Clark: two crashes, sight views, traffic calming needed
- Rte. 613, Orchard, Park, Walnut circle? Dangerous intersection

- E Broad St and Springfield Ave. intersection – major queuing signal to turn left
- Replace faded traffic signs
- Electric vehicle charging stations?
- Please pave the roads – North and South Chestnut, Rahway Ave., Clark St. *require/mandate that all utility companies that chop up the roads must **fully pave entire road way width** after the work is completed

Parking

- **Need more parking especially for commuters**
- 3-5 year wait for commuter parking
- A jitney to get people to the train station?
- **Parking deck needed!!**
 - with turf fields on top level!
 - for retail & commuter
 - more pressure on NJ Transit
 - with multi-levels and mixed-use developments
 - if deck, street (free) parking on Elm St. must be limited to



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2-hour & resident only to
push freeloaders into decks

- Potential deck locations
 - **Behind Baron's Drugs**
 - Trader Joe's parking lot
 - South side Train Station
 - North side train station lot (adj. to Central & North Ave. behind movie theatre)
 - one-level deck at Lot #7
 - one-level deck at Lot #2
 - one-level deck at Lot #8
- Require any new parking be matched with green infrastructure
- Consider stacking parking structures
- Stop giving parking variances to businesses (new) – require them to purchase parking permits for employees
- Hillside – narrow parking on both sides
- Elm, between Cowperthwaite and E. Dudley: People parking, no time restriction
- Clark St., parking on both sides, very narrow

Transit

- **NJ Transit 1 seat ride**
- Jitney to/from downtown – centralized parking outside, underground parking
- NJ Transit one seat service, more late-night trains, gateway
- Think of commuters who use Garwood as closest station for train

Bicycle

- Need more bike racks – train station, covered, downtown, at parks
- Add bike lanes on E. Broad
- A safer way for people to bike around town?

- Want to see E-scooters

Pedestrian

- School crosswalk
- Controlled crosswalks
- Need better system for repaving sidewalks
- Re-set bluestone sidewalks – work with home owners!
- Better sidewalks, especially adding where there aren't any (Sycamore going into Garwood)
- Carleton, between Ross and Fairfield – sidewalks = poor condition
- I love our downtown. Fortunately, I am close enough to walk.
- I like to walk throughout downtown. I like that I can get all over on foot once I've parked.
- Streets are bike/pedestrian safe

Safety

- I think drivers in town are not safety-conscious. I see a lot of speeding, going through stop signs and pulling way past where you need to stop at stop signs. Not safe for kids going to/from school, going downtown, etc.
- Ped. safety! Enforce speed limits!
- Speed limits on main roads (e.g. South, Mountain, North, Central, etc.) not adhered to for drivers who do not yield to pedestrians
- Better lighting at crosswalks
- More concern for safety issues for pedestrians at North/South/Central intersection – ped. button not working, better lighting for pedestrians.

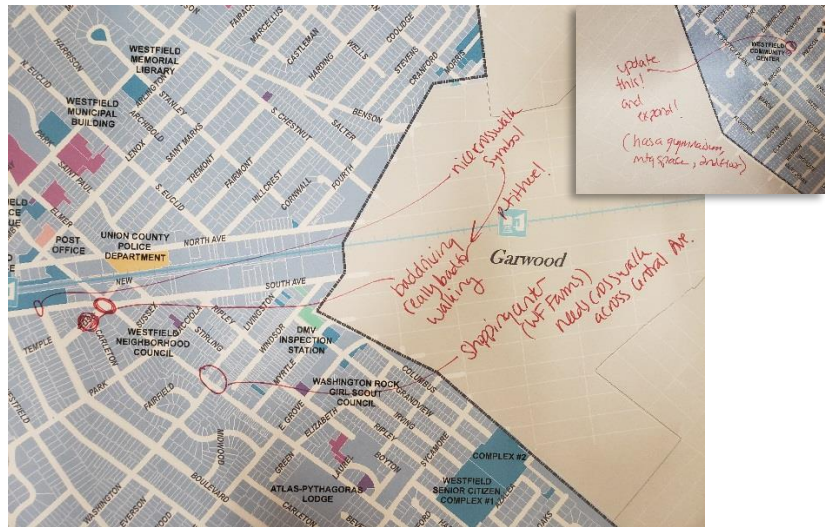
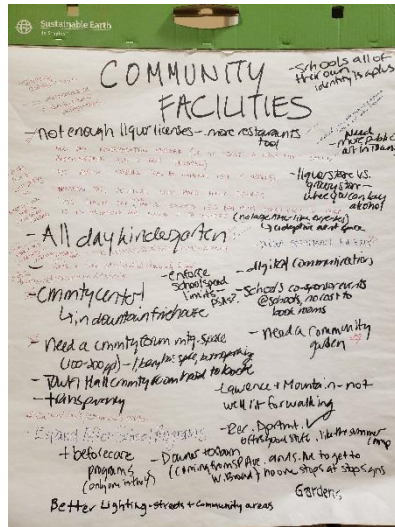
Miscellaneous

- Event/Concert Hall
- Buy Sunoco at CVS
- Force State and developers to pay



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3. Community Facilities



Community Facilities concerns include:

Schools

- Expand STEM afterschool programs, more and better programs
- Expand after school programs and before care programs (only one is there)
- **All day kindergarten needed** (or at least a wrap that can accommodate all K-age children)
- Part-time Pre-K needed (can be nominal cost if needed)
- Schools all have their own identity – this is a plus

Public Art / Culture

- Need more public art in town!
- Broaden jazz festival with more music genres
- Need a community garden
- Gardens

Library

- Where library is now used to be the Grant School (late 1900s)

- Not enough room at library, poorly designed, not enough room at library for kids

Community Center

- There is the Westfield Community Center – we should update it and expand! (has a gymnasium, meeting space, 2nd floor)
- **Community Center!**
- Cultural/arts/community center
- An option is to have a community center in downtown firehouse
- Take a look at Cranford Community Center
- Need indoor basketball for kids

Meeting Space

- **Not enough meeting space in Town**
- Town Hall Community room hard to book
- There is no cost to book rooms at the schools when the schools co-sponsor the events



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- Need a community forum meeting space that can fit 100-200 people – library has the room space but not the parking space
- Use Rialto for more movie events (e.g. Bad Moms, Lorax, etc.) to keep it in business and allow it to compete (no large AMC-like expense) – adaptive event space

Safety

- Enforce school speed limits – PSAs?
- Lawrence & Mountain – **not well lit for walking**
- Better lighting – streets & community areas

Town Services

- Recreation Department offers good stuff like the summer camp
- Town should embrace digital communications
- Need more transparency
- Move Fire Department to Lord & Taylor parking lot
- All infrastructure is old – the intersection of Quimby & Broad is a

'hotspot' of underground infrastructure

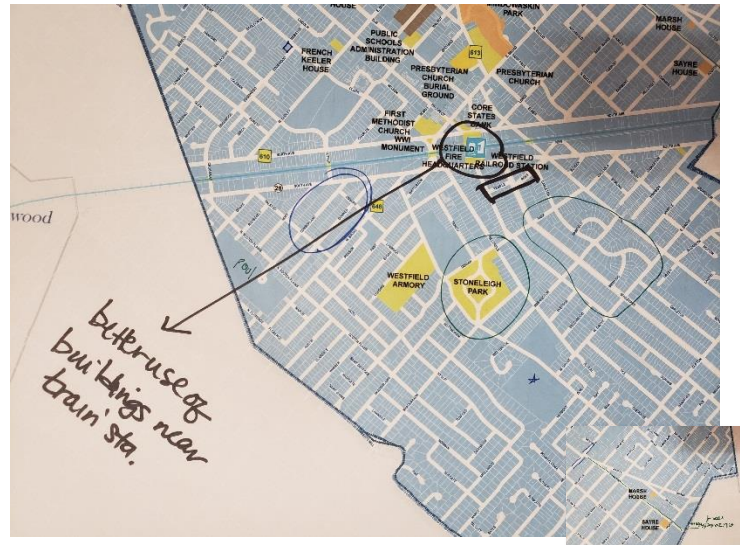
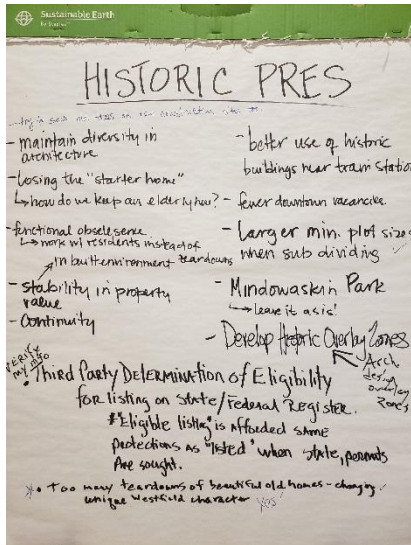
Miscellaneous

- Downer & Osborn (coming from Scotch Plains Ave. & South Ave. to get to W. Broad) no one stops at stop signs
- South Ave. at Ross/Central Ave. – bad driving, really bad for walking - Nice crosswalk symbol – put the nice crosswalk symbol at Boulevard and South Ave. here!
- Need a crosswalk at Washington St. & Central Ave. crossing Central to connect residential to mini-shopping center
- Shutting Quimby? Maybe
- Need more benches downtown - to enjoy ice cream (for example)!
- Need more restaurants!
- **Push the state to change liquor laws** – Not enough liquor licenses & Liquor store vs. grocery store – where you can buy alcohol



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4. Historic Preservation



Historic Preservation concerns include:

- Try to save old trees on new construction sites too
- Maintain diversity in architecture
- Losing the “starter home” – how do we keep elderly here?
- Functional obsolescence – work with residents instead of teardowns, in built environment
- Stability in property value
- Continuity
- Better use of historic buildings near train station
- Larger min. lot sizes when sub-dividing
- Mindowaskin Park – leave it as is!
- Develop historic overlay zones, architectural design overlay zones
- (Verify my info) Third Party Determination of Eligibility for listing on State/Federal Register. “Eligible listing” is afforded same protections as “listed” when State permits are sought.
- Too many teardowns of beautiful old homes – changing unique Westfield character
- Better use of buildings near train station
- Broad & S. Chestnut – Elizabethtown road